

**Democrats of Napa Valley**

**Candidate Questionnaire**

**Candidate for Mayor**

**DEADLINE FOR RETURN TO DEMOCRATS OF NAPA VALLEY: Friday, AUGUST 9**

Candidate's Name: Paul J. Dohring Area/District: City of St. Helena (Mayor)  
Mobil ph. #: (707)696-5406 Party Affiliation: Democrat  
E-Mail: paul@winecountrylaw.com  
Occupation: Attorney Employer: Self Employed  
Campaign Manager: Self-Managed Contact #: (707) 942-1298

If an Incumbent, please provide the year your original term of office began: Elected Mayor of St Helena in 2022 after serving on the council the prior 8 years.

**Candidate Specific Questions**

**1. Provide a bio of your relevant experience/background for this office. (200 words maximum)**

*I was born into a working-class family with little formal education and extremely modest means. I spent much of my childhood with my Mexican American grandmother. After the tragic deaths of my father and grandmother in 1968, my mother raised 6 sons as a single mom.*

*I am the only member of my family to attend college. In 1983, I graduated from **UC Berkeley**. I received my law degree from **UC Davis Law School**. I have practiced law for over 36 years, 33 in Napa Valley. I specialize in business, insurance disputes, real estate, civil litigation, and mediations/arbitrations.*

*I have been married to Kara, a public-school teacher, for 36 years. We've lived in the Napa Valley since 1991. We are the proud parents of two children, ages 23 and 26.*

*My experience is unmatched:*

- ***Current Mayor of St. Helena***
- ***St. Helena City Council (10 years, 4 years as Vice Mayor, 2 years as Mayor)***
- ***California State Bar (36 years)***
- ***Calistoga Planning Commission***
- ***Calistoga City Council (4 years, 2 as Vice Mayor)***
- ***Napa County Flood Control and Water Conservation District***
- ***LAFCO***
- ***ABAG***
- ***Napa Valley Transportation Authority (12 Years)***
- ***Community Action Napa Valley***
- ***Napa Expo Board (7 Years)***
- ***Rotary Club***
- ***Chamber of Commerce***

**2. List your key supporters, including campaign volunteers and hired consultants, and endorsements.**

*Congressman Mike Thompson, Senator Bill Dodd, Napa County Supervisor Anne Cottrell, Council Member Anna Chouteau, Former St. Helena Mayors Alan Galbraith, Geoff Ellsworth and Ann Nevero, Napa Mayor Scott Sedgley, American Canyon Mayor Leon Garcia, Yountville Mayor Margie Mohler. (more coming) Additionally some of my supporters include Oscar DeHaro, Rosaura Segura, Pat Dell, Grace Kistner, restaurateur Ernesto Martinez, retired attorney Kathleen Herdell, many legal professionals, small business owners, vineyard managers, hospitality business owners, seniors, Latinos, parents, teachers, retirees. I have never used a campaign consultant and will not do so in this election.*

**3. Where do you expect to receive your main financial commitments? A broad spectrum of legal professionals, small business owners, vineyard managers, hospitality business owners, seniors, Latinos, parents, teachers, retirees**

**4. What distinguishes your candidacy and campaign from the other candidates for this office?**

***Experience, Commitment, Focus***

*Over the past 10 years, and especially the last 2 as mayor, I have quietly yet persistently worked hard to bring our staff, council and community together, to keep us together and to ensure that we work together to tackle our most pressing issues. We have advanced numerous projects, initiatives, events, programs, policies, and proclamations to completion through my focused efforts, diligence, and consensus-building skills. Being a mayor is a mystery to most folks who think it is only about facilitating a council meeting. I can assure you that the position involves much more. The demands and responsibilities are immense but the opportunity for public service (serving a cause greater than oneself) is deeply rewarding.*

*As a small business owner, attorney, elected representative, community volunteer and husband and proud father, I have gained the experience, insight, perspective, and temperament to lead our community and council. (see pauldohringformayor.org)*

**Issues (100 words maximum per question)**

**5. What do you see as the major issues and their possible solutions in this campaign?**

*Going forward, our city council must continue to:*

- *Prioritize water security and the delivery of clean, safe water in the face of a climate crisis*
- *Manage rising municipal costs while ensuring sufficient revenues for police, fire, emergency and other vital city services*
- *Continue to invest heavily in our roads, sidewalks and municipal infrastructure*
- *Advance wildfire prevention and preparedness.*
- *Create more employee housing to create a full-spectrum, inclusive community*

*We must continue to focus on these urgent issues in our policymaking and advocacy. We must be strategic and decisive, but also compassionate and inclusive: We must continually build consensus in our often-divided community by balancing the need for revenues and economic sustainability with the preservation of our precious neighborhoods, agrarian values and high quality of life, and we must ensure that our whole community benefits from our decisions and actions. I am committed to a balanced, unifying approach and to the greater good of our entire community. I have been able to bring our residents and business owners together to tackle these challenges, and I will continue going forward.*

**6. Do you believe in and would you work to protect a woman's right to choose and to have control over her own body? Yes No Is it easy enough for a woman in Napa County to access healthcare to have an abortion?**

*Given my long-standing faith as a Roman Catholic, and my unique life experiences and circumstances, I am personally opposed to abortion. However, I unequivocally support a woman's right to choose, and I believe that the decision to have an abortion should be made by a woman in consultation with her doctor, her family, and her faith. Women are only able to live healthy and fulfilling lives if they can control their reproductive decisions, and women are best qualified to make these decisions.*

*The Supreme Court decision, Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization, is deeply troubling and problematic as it allows states to criminalize abortion and ban it, even in the case of rape, incest, and threat to the life of the mother. The decision upends fundamental rights of privacy and puts reproductive care at risk for millions of women. We must continue to fight for access to reproductive care to protect the health, well-being, and autonomy of women, and we must work to reverse the Supreme Court's misguided ruling.*

*We must preserve the right to privacy while promoting a comprehensive approach to reproductive health care, including planning for healthy families, preventing unintended pregnancies, and providing comprehensive and medically accurate sexuality education. Women must have full access to and availability of programs for pre and post-natal health care, parenting skills, and income support.*

*I support health care and education programs that help reduce the number of unintended pregnancies and thereby also reduce the need for abortions. I also support access to affordable family planning services and comprehensive age-appropriate sex education which empower folks to make informed choices and live healthy lives. Additionally, as an adoptive father I also am a strong supporter of adoption and adoption education: I believe we should provide more resources to make adoption a viable alternative, as long as the information is accurate and not misleading.*

*I don't profess to know enough about abortion access statistics in Napa County, relative to other counties. I would have to perform a more in-depth inquiry to determine whether demand for abortion access is being fully accommodated. Although the City of Napa has services, it appears that services are limited throughout Napa County. I am very concerned about access to appropriate care by people of color or from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. I am equally concerned about misleading information being disseminated by alleged "crisis pregnancy centers" that may impede access by dissuading people from having an abortion or misdirecting them away from abortion care or reproductive health services provided by organizations like Planned Parenthood.*

*Likewise, I am concerned about locating anti-abortion organizations close to Planned Parenthood facilities and on site protesting that could intimidate some from receiving the abortion care or reproductive health care services they require.*

**7. Is the City doing most everything it can to ensure that residents feel safe? Yes X No If No, what 1-2 ideas do you think should be considered.**

*We need to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety in and around Highway 29 with various traffic controls and traffic calming measures, including traffic circles. We need to make sure our Safe Storage of Firearms Ordinance brought forward by Council Member Chouteau is being implemented and that our residents are more fully aware of its requirements. We need to continue to fund (and potentially expand) our School Resource Law Enforcement Officer at our Middle and High Schools. We need to promote and use, when necessary, our existing Red Flag (restraining order) laws to prevent guns from getting into the hands of folks who should not possess them. We need to continue to reduce stigma around mental illness, continue to educate around the use of fentanyl and other harmful drugs, and continue to support our mental health partners and agencies to prevent tragic loss of life to suicide or drug overdose.*

**8. The number of children enrolled in school in Napa County continues to decline. What are 2-3 solutions to at least slow or stop this decline?**

*The issue of declining school enrollment is due to several factors, but it is clear to me that this decline, particularly Upvalley, is due in large part to an aging population, declining birthrates and the high cost of housing. The first two of these causes are obviously quite daunting. However, affordable housing, although challenging, is something that we can work to address through focused and diligent efforts with all of our partners to create more affordable housing to retain our workforce and our young families. We are fortunate to have high quality schools in St. Helena, both private and public, but these educational organizations may wish to enhance school programs, create more innovative programs, and provide more extracurricular activities. We can also expand learning options and vocational and apprentice programs to meet the needs of our unique economy.*

**9. Is there anything else you would like to tell us?**

*Now, more than ever, we need a clear-eyed, experienced, optimistic leader who will emphasize health, wellness & public safety, work strategically, decisively, and collaboratively, and always exercise independent judgment --without fear or favor. We need a legal and financial steward focused on tackling our current issues: economic sustainability, neighborhood preservation, wildfire preparedness, and prevention, safe drinking water, downtown revitalization, municipal infrastructure, roads and sidewalks, housing, climate change, and inclusivity. I am that leader.*

*It's been an honor serving my community as a Council Member for 10 years, especially the last 2 as Mayor. In the last election, I promised to be "all-in" as St. Helena's Mayor. I delivered on that promise, and I will continue to deliver going forward.*

**Thank you for your service to Democracy.**

*Paul Jamison Dohring*

Signature

August 14, 2024

Date